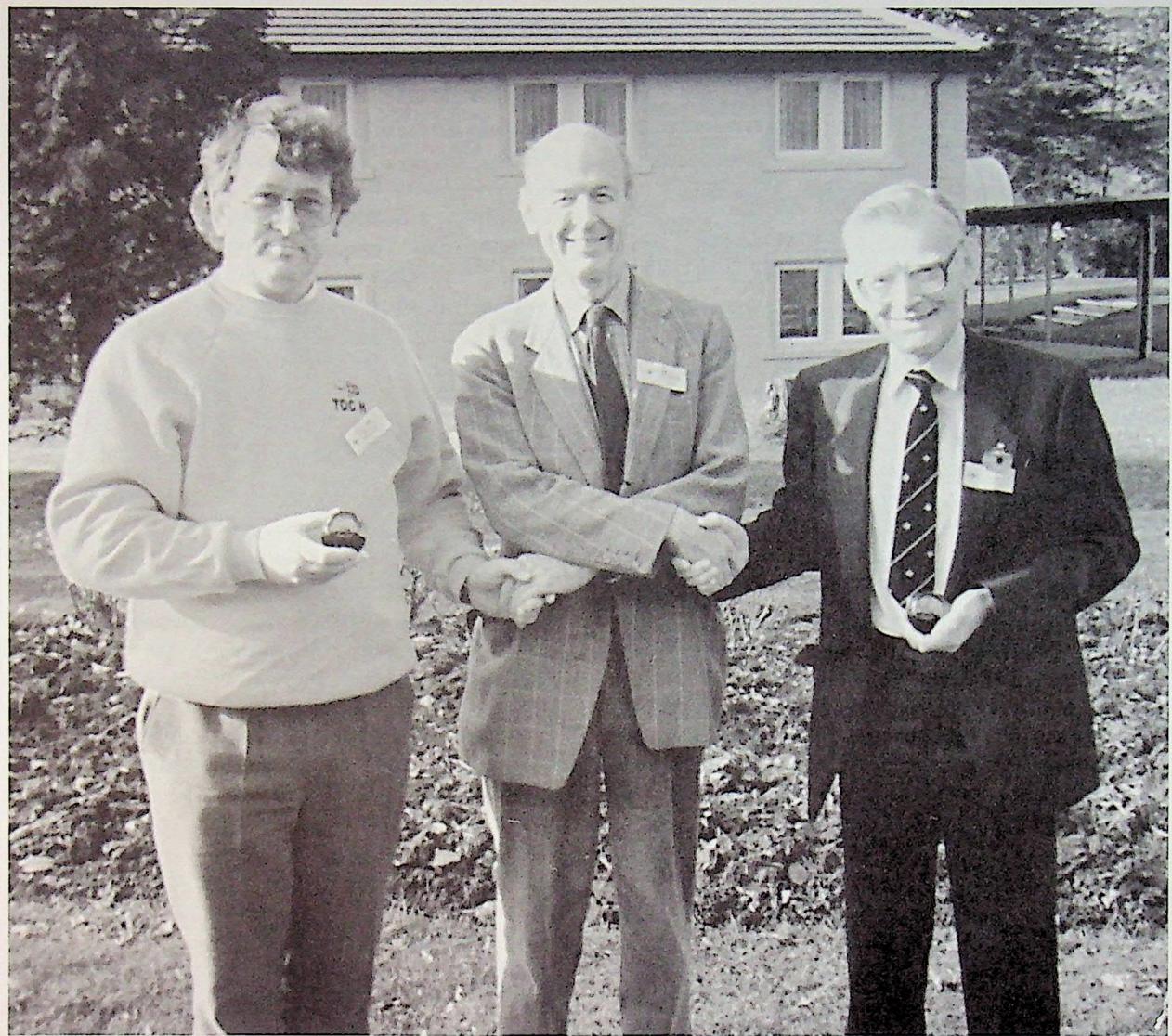


DECEMBER 1992



Point three

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The magazine of



Toc H is a movement of people who seek to build friendships, and offer service, across the barriers that usually divide us from one another. The basic unit is a group - at best a good cross-section of the local neighbourhood - which meets together regularly, and seeks to serve the community around it. Toc H was founded in 1915 by the Revd P B 'Tubby' Clayton, and since then has been providing opportunities for people to test the Christian way by practical experiment.

All members pledge themselves to try:

1. To welcome all in friendship and lessen by habit of thought, word and deed the prejudices which separate people.
2. To give personal service.
3. To find their own convictions while listening with respect to the views of others.
4. To acknowledge the spiritual nature of man and to test the Christian way by trying it.

This magazine is a forum for ideas about Toc H and about the world as well as a record of Toc H service. Its title derives from the third of these Four Points.

Christmas ... What is it all about?

Once more Christmas is upon us, and we shall celebrate as usual - presents, parties, tables laden with food, a break from work, the renewal of friendships through the exchange of greeting cards. Are these the most important things about the Festive Season? I wonder. In these days when we measure the value of things by their size, noise, speed or cost, the simple message, 'Peace on earth to men of goodwill', seems of little importance.

A revolutionary change has taken place in the Christian climate of Great Britain. Time was when the voice of the church was heeded in the realm of morals and social responsibility. Men prayed 'by nature'; they made time for devotion; they knew their Bibles and loved the stories of Jesus. We were 'a Godfearing people'.

But today, with modern medicine to cure our bodily ills, the wonders of science to take us for trips outside this planet, and the world so full of material things to worship, there seems very little time left to give to a story of 2000 years ago.

The loveliest story in the world is the story of God's coming into, and transcending, our human insignificance. The message of the angels, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace toward men' (*Luke 2:14*), has inspired men and guided history, and is still the message for the world. It is the story of God offering Himself for the salvation of man, and asking man to do the same. Are we prepared to listen to the message of Christmas today?

A recent press survey asked 'How heathen is England?' We cannot expect to live on our capital of Christian culture much longer: if the Faith is to be a living reality in this country and the world, it calls for Christian witness in our own daily lives.

Let us take another look at the Christmas story; maybe we shall find that some very ancient and orthodox Christian insights are as valid today as ever!

One thing God teaches us in the Incarnation is that it

is impossible to deal with a situation that is wrong or unhappy unless you get into it. A word popular in sociology and theology is 'involvement', and this is just what Christmas is all about. It is God getting involved; involved with poverty and hard work; involved with a fractious, noisy, nationalistic people; involved with sin and sinners, involved (that is) with you and me.

Another lesson in Christmas is that men are greater than they know. Earthy shepherds were more sensitive to spiritual phenomena than they realised. Crude fishermen left their trade at the bidding of a Master; dishonest merchants and officials discovered that they had been betraying all that was best in themselves and gave it up for Christ. They became men and women with a new meaning for themselves.

If this new sense of self-importance was created in the fellowship of Jesus, so also was their dependence on each other. They discovered that they could not be happy in a world where evil, tragedy, loneliness and unfulfilment were the lot of their fellows.

It is easy to be happy in this world of 1992 until one of two things happen to us - we ourselves meet tragedy or come face to face with it in others. To lie in hospital and receive comfort from fellow patients whose suffering is greater than your own helps you to understand something of Christ's compassion. To face a human life in shipwreck and feel helpless turns you to the source of all help, and hope of healing.

This Christmas Toc H will go out as always, in service to others. There will be parties for the elderly, treats for deprived children, mysterious parcels cluttering up our meeting rooms. Perhaps in all the fun of packing and the joy of sharing, God will be present? He was once, when simple men brought their gifts.

God Bless you all this Christmastide.

Nora Bloxham

Editor: Ruth Boyd

Editorial Assistant: Thomas Hill Long

Cover: Retiring CEC Chairman Alastair Muir presenting John Burgess and David Woodall with a token of appreciation for 25 years service on the staff

Photo: Ruth Boyd



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BRANCH NEWS

We would like to receive more news from branches about their work in the community, such as individual projects.

Postcard from Germany

Jane Bridgeman, Berlin Development Officer, recently held a CAMEO at the Toc H Centre in Berlin at which we finally got our first Russians to attend. She reports:

It is now more than two years since the re-unification of Germany. In that time I have often heard the word *Ausländer* (foreigner), but not more so than in the present climate, marked by increasing violence against foreigners and asylum-seekers and the effects of reunification on the people living in Germany. Because of this, the Berlin Toc H Group sent out invitations to a gathering on 14 October to discuss 'Changes in Berlin'. Six Germans (two from the former GDR), six British, two Russians and two Americans attended the sessions, the conversations being held in German. On the whole, the day went well, but the main point, brought up time and time again, was how reunification



had affected peoples' pockets, with rent increases, unemployment and price rises. I was saddened by the comment, 'The wall should have stayed up', and this was not just from people living in the Federal Republic. I felt the CAMEO went well, but it left me with a feeling of frustration and sadness. One good outcome is that our Russian guests will be returning for the

Personality Corner

It seemed a good idea to introduce you to our staff in Germany. Our first personality, David Woodall, recently completed 25 years service with Toc H. He was born and raised in Stourbridge, educated at the King Edward VI Grammar School, and joined the old War Office after leaving school and passing the Civil Service Exam. After National Service in the UK and Germany, David returned briefly to the Civil Service. In 1967 he was interviewed for and accepted a post with Service Clubs in Germany and has worked in Munster, Verden and Berlin, where he has remained since 1980. Extramural interests include chairmanships of the Royal British Legion and of the British Community Berlin Committee, classical music and travel.

Stop Press. The first of the British contributions to the UK humanitarian relief convoys has just left Herford en route for Croatia/Bosnia with 200 soldiers in all. Godspeed and Good Luck!

Malcolm Lowe *Zuchmeister*

World Chain of Light and our Christmas celebrations. We have broken the ice at last! (A final note: A big thank-you to David Ruddy for running the creche for the day.)

Jane also visited the Russian community in Potsdam, spending the day with Olga Serebrenikova and her son Igor. She writes:



Lunch was in a Russian military restaurant, and the meal itself was an experience: raw (pickled) fish, beetroot soup, liver casserole, all washed down with vodka. The restaurant doubles as a sort of community centre and throughout the day people called in. The main topic of conversation was the changes affecting us all. I felt quite guilty when we discussed the rise in the cost of living in Berlin, as the average Russian wage there is about 300DM (£120) per month for a family, 30DM (£12) for a single soldier. This compares with 4500DM (£1800) per month for a Berlin family, 1500DM (£600) for a single (British) soldier stationed in Berlin. In the afternoon we walked to the Glienicker Bridge, famous from its appearance in many spy films. We have arranged to meet again next month, with a typical English meal which Elsie Thomas (a member of the Berlin Toc H Group) will prepare....



David Woodall, Deputy Centre Manager (Berlin) with the 25 year award for service, presented to him at this year's council at Swanwick

CENTRAL COUNCIL 1992

For the second time Council was open to members who are not Councillors and 22 attended, together with seven guests. A total of 185 were present and it was nice to see some of the 'characters' back this year. Both Ted Tunnadine (former Hon Treasurer) and Scottish Chairman Jimmy Beveridge were welcome presences, particularly as last year they were recovering from surgery.

Ted was one of the chief opponents of the Long-Term Strategic Plan, which was the main issue before this year's Council. Among others who felt that the Plan was incomplete and should be referred back to the CEC for more work were David Mayhew (Chaplain, Cleveland Team), Neal Terry (Tyne & Wear District), Don Cullen (Melton Mowbray), Doug Geater Childs (Edgbaston) and Ken Prideaux-Brunne (Trustee). Despite their reservations, the Strategic Plan was carried with a sizeable majority, although for much of the debate it looked as if the die was cast against.

One of the first items on the agenda was the motion passing the extension of John Mitchell's appointment as Director for a further year. John then launched into the traditional Director's Speech, much of which was an encouragement to stand fast on the basics of Toc H while we worked out what we needed to change in order to go forward.

He emphasised that most members saw what was needed locally and responded to that need. 'We have a distinctive Christian role. We need to say our prayers and listen to the right answer for Toc H, bearing in mind our agreed focus and the nature of the Movement. It isn't easy; who said it would be?'

This was followed by the CEC's report to Central Council and the Hon Treasurer Gerry Conibeer presented the accounts. He said that our deficit was £412,000, compared with £257,000 the previous year, due to more investment on development and reduction in investment profits. He explained, 'Our capital base is bound to go down a bit. As things stand we will lose 10% of this base if the status quo is maintained'.

Ted Tunnadine and the Revd Jack Harrison (former Finance Secretary) congratulated Gerry. ▼



Gerry Conibeer



Revd Jack Harrison



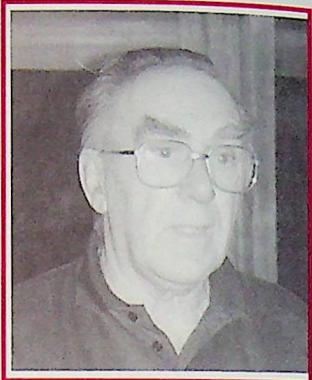
Ted Tunnadine



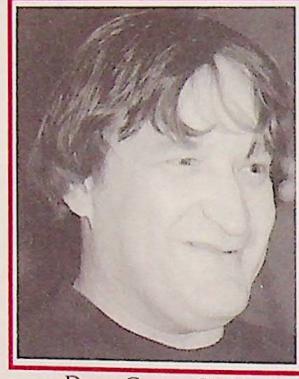
David Mayhew



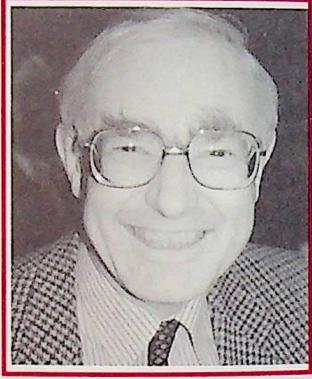
Neal Terry



Don Cullen



Doug Geater Childs



Ken Prideaux-Brunne

Motion 11 -

THE LONG-TERM STRATEGIC PLAN

This was proposed by Adrian Dudman. With great feeling he proclaimed, 'If we are to be on the frontier again we need to address the real problems of modern life - loneliness, poverty, homelessness, concern for the Third World. How can we be peacemakers at a more local level? How do we tackle this huge task? It is clear that the need for a movement such as ours has never been greater. This plan is about partnership. It is your commitment, your sharing of yourselves widely and lovingly that is needed. You are the key that will unlock the door. This plan is only part of a whole. We need to grasp the nettle to take this movement forward. The plan wills the means. But only you can will the end'.

Delegates then split into ten discussion groups to discuss the Long-Term Strategic Plan, followed by a two hour debate.

The Picture in 1997 - 'Vision Statement'

The Plan reminded Councillors of the 1989 Focus Resolution and went on to suggest to Council how we would like Toc H to be in 1997. This was called the Vision Statement and is as follows:

By 1997 - Toc H will be providing these opportunities in such quality and quantity that divisions in society will be increasingly eroded by its work. It will pay attention to areas of the deepest division. By its very nature, this work will also promote the growth of those involved, to which Toc H has always been deeply committed.

Toc H will continue as a Membership Movement, firmly rooted in the Four Points of the Compass. It will challenge an increasing number of people to accept a threefold commitment to their neighbours (especially those who are most in need in society, or most alienated from it), to their own spiritual growth (by testing the Christian way), and to Toc H itself and its future.

Individual members will be able to participate at all levels in one national Movement, and will be challenged, encouraged and guided by a well trained staff. Members will be encouraged to express their commitment to Toc H by participating in both short-term activities (e.g. Projects and Cameos) and long-term groupings (e.g., Branches/Groups and Friendship Circles) and encouraged to accept responsibility for leadership at all levels.

Toc H will be known for its skill and good practice in its working with people separated by divisions in society and will collaborate with others working in similar ways.

Toc H will have begun to generate new sources of income so that increasingly it will be less dependent on capital reserves.

The Wider Strategy: Public Relations and Communications

Primary Purpose: To make Toc H better known to the general public; to generate interest in, and recruit participants to, Methods.

Preparation/Education/Training

Primary Purpose: To ensure that participants, Members and staff understand the philosophy of Toc H, are equipped with the necessary skills and/or information to undertake the work of Toc H, and to provide opportunities to explore personal and spiritual growth.

Methods Development

Primary Purpose: To develop Methods in both numbers of opportunities and quality of experience in accordance with the Vision Statement.

Membership Structure and Support

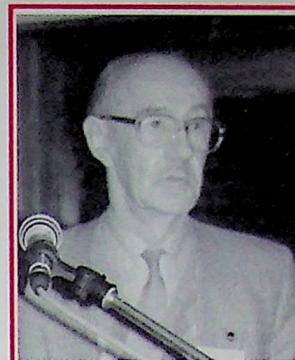
Primary Purpose: To promote Membership and encourage and value Members. To ensure the follow up of, quality communication with, and continued participation of, people associated with Toc H.

Organisational Structure

Primary Purpose: To provide a simple structure to enable Toc H to be both maintained and developed effectively.

Money Matters (Financial Management and Fund Raising)

Primary Purpose: Ensuring responsible stewardship of the resources of Toc H both for current and future needs.



Harry Brier



Adrian Dudman

There was a very impassioned debate about the Plan and it was passed with the pledge from Adrian that there would be no action on membership subscriptions until there had been wide consultation, and the issue would then be brought back to Council for further debate. He also took note of the general concern that the Plan gave insufficient attention to the development of our Methods and gave an assurance that the CEC would look more closely at their development, recognising that this was the main thrust of Toc H work and the section least considered in the Plan.

Many of the speakers who found flaws with the proposals were critical of the idea of having, as Harry Brier (Lindley) put it, '*more chiefs in the wigwam*'. They were concerned that having three new management posts at headquarters would make the Movement more steeped in bureaucracy, when what was needed was support at grass-roots level, '*out there where there is real need*'. Others felt that there was little point in developing public relations without a clear product to promote.

Adrian Dudman gave a personal pledge that the Plan was '*A real step in faith in terms of resources - but YOU will do something about it. The Motion is only a starting point. Eighty per cent of the time these new staff will be out in the regions*'.

Motion 12 - BRANCH AND GROUP STANDARDS

John Evans (Treforest) proposed that Council should set broadly the same minimum requirements for existing branches and groups as had been adopted last year for new groups. These would include proper production of annual accounts, having people in office taking responsibility for the job of Secretary, Pilot and Jobmaster, having a period of reflection in most meetings and meeting at least ten times a year. The motion was carried unanimously.

Motion 13 - THE FUTURE OF COMMUNITY HOUSES

Adrian Dudman proposed that Toc H would not repeat the experiment of community houses, which had been largely unsuccessful. John Bayes (Guisborough), argued that 'writing them off' might mean that other opportunities would be lost which might prevent future outreach at a time of huge unemployment. Eric Instone (Birmingham Outward Group), based at Birmingham Community House and attending Council for the first time, felt it a retrograde step because they were an excellent way of recruiting new young members. In reply, Adrian assured Council that this Resolution would not prevent CEC acquiring properties for future work, as appropriate. The motion was carried.

Motion 14 - CONTRACTS WITH LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Anne Puddicombe (Chairman North-East Region) proposed that Toc H should be free to enter into contracts with local authorities and that the CEC decision not to enter into contracts last year was ill advised and had wider implications for the Movement. She argued that all contracts should be judged on their own merits.

In supporting the CECs position, Mary Edwards argued that we serve people from a Christian commitment, not a legal commitment.



John Bayes



Anne Puddicombe

John Bayes (Guisborough), in support of the motion, described the great concern from within social services that government care in the community proposals should provide what is wanted by the community. He explained that the Director of Social Services in Cleveland acknowledged the problem of how

to convert bureaucracy into 'tender loving care'. He felt that here was a real task for Toc H; that we could be pioneers in this area and pleaded, 'Don't let us close off a field of venture that could be of great benefit'. The motion was rejected but the voting was close (38 - 28).

Motion 16 - RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS ACCOUNTS

Olive Tenant (Norwich Senior Action Group) proposed that we should be responsible as a movement for the money we raise and that, in future, accounts of all residential projects should be included as a separate item in the national Toc H accounts. She asked why Toc H had never recognised that money given to Toc H projects from outside agencies is not accounted for. There was a great deal of support for Olive, particularly among younger members - notably Matthew Plumridge (Woking), himself an accountant, who said, 'Projects are a product of this organisation, and finance is a huge element of our work and it is not taken into consideration'.

The enormity of the problem in obtaining all the necessary figures was considered too great to make the proposal practicable and it was amended and passed to read that Project Reports should be included as a separate item in the Annual CEC report to Council.

Motion 19 - REPORT FROM TOC H IN GERMANY

Arthur Heffernan, Chairman of the Services Development subCommittee, spoke of an exciting year for Toc H in Germany. He introduced Field Officer Malcolm Lowe, a member of the new Toc H Paderborn Group - soon to become the first branch in Germany since the war - Vanessa Harriman and Terry Brown, Development Officer in Munster.

Council ended with the presentation by retiring CEC Chairman Alastair Muir of a token of appreciation to two staff members, John Burgess and David Woodall, for achieving 25 years of service. (See cover photo).

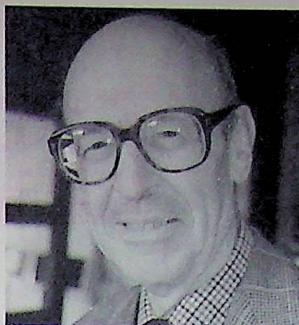
There was a vote of thanks to Helen James and Rob Hidderley, who were standing down from the CEC, and special thanks to Sarah Cottingham, Anne Dudman and Judi Ranson for running the creche which Alastair Muir described as 'a Godsend to Council'.

Final thanks were expressed to Alastair himself from Betty Cornick (Trustee), herself a former chairman, for his four years as an outstandingly successful chairman.





Betty Cornick



Alastair Muir



The Creche



CEC

The new CEC, John Mitchell, Adrian Dudman, Neal Terry, Alan Johnson, Edgar Stickley, Jean Whiteman, Jackie Bartlett, Christine Bostock, Arthur Heffernan, Gerry Conibear, John Evans, Mary Edwards, John Cox, Pat Turner, Stephen Clark, Stewart Casimir. (Di Claxton is missing from the photo but can be seen in the back row of the creche photo).

Council ended with an Act of Worship by the Revd Alan Johnson, National Chaplain. ■

Memories of an Old Soldier

*One fateful day upon the Somme
Most of my pals were dead and gone.
A few of them knew the night before
Their days on earth were nearly o'er.*

*Some of these boys need not have died
When stating their age they surely lied.
They did not say how young their years
When Britain asked for volunteers.*

*So over the top we had to go
Hoping this time to beat the foe.
I heard their screams and shouts of fear
Now they are gone but I'm still here.*

*I'm one of the few who did not die
But often I sit alone and cry.
One day in Heaven I'm sure to see
Those soldiers who were pals to me.*



Ron Haresign
Bramley Branch

Remembrance Day at Denny - Jim Beveridge (Chairman Scottish Region) laying the Toc H wreath

A Toc H Carol

*The star shone bright in winter sky,
A compass showing men the way,
A light that came from God on high,
A lamp to guide us day by day.*

*'No room within', the landlord cried,
'We want no strangers staying here.'
May we put prejudice aside,
And fairly think, and no men fear.*

*God's message, told by angel voice,
Was 'Peace on earth and love for all.'
To widely love must be our choice
As we respond to God's clear call.*

*The shepherds to the stable came
To see their God, in manger there.
May we speak always in Thy name,
In humble witness of Thy care.*

*The wise men travelling from abroad
Worshipped the Child as God and King.
May we build bravely for our Lord,
And Him put first in everything.*

Revd W Elliott
Kidderminster

**A Happy Christmas
to all our Readers**

Jerusalem, A Holy and Divided City

Ken Prideaux-Brune reflects on a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

The fireworks, great multi-coloured circles of light, marked the start of the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the reuniting of Jerusalem following the Six Day War. But the city is still divided, its Arab and Jewish quarters separate and distinct. In the narrow alleys of the Old City you pass from the Arab souk, with little stalls selling spices and vegetables and trinkets, to the up-market jewellery shops of the Jewish quarter further along the same street.

Jerusalem is home to Jews and Muslims and Christians; and it is a centre of pilgrimage for all three religions. Jews come to worship at the Western Wall, sometimes known as the Wailing Wall, a name that seemed inappropriate the morning we were there when the area was full of happy family parties celebrating bar mitzvahs. I remember particularly one boy, carried in on his father's shoulders and revelling in being the centre of attention. The Dome of the Rock is the third holiest shrine in Islam and of all the holy sites we saw it was, for me, the one with the most powerful sense of the presence of God. Christians visit the various sites traditionally associated with the arrest, death and Resurrection of Jesus, all marked by churches of many, competing, denominations. Jerusalem is, as it has always been, a holy city and a divided city, sometimes a meeting point and sometimes a battle ground.



Dome of the Rock

We had gone as pilgrims to see the Christian sites, places where the events that gave birth to our religion took place and which have been the object of pilgrimage since at least the 4th century AD. But it was not so much the sites themselves but the geography which made an impact. The old road from Jerusalem to Jericho, winding through brown, barren hills - not a tree, not a blade of grass - brings the story of the Good Samaritan to vivid life. The steep, rocky slopes of the Mount of Olives, descending through the gnarled old olive trees in what was probably the Garden of Gethsemane, into the Kidron Valley and then up

equally steeply to the walls of Jerusalem, can have changed little since the time of Jesus. The beauty of the Sea of Galilee makes one appreciate why the disciples were so reluctant to leave this green, fertile country for the harsh landscape round Jerusalem.



Western Wall

We were moved by an open air Communion on the hill which is the traditional site of the Sermon on the Mount. But it was the beauty and serenity of the place that moved us, a quiet garden looking down on the Sea of Galilee. By contrast we walked the Via Dolorosa, the route Jesus may have taken to his crucifixion, stopping at each of the Stations of the Cross. We walked through the heart of the Arab souk and we stopped among the hurrying, bargaining crowds to sing a hymn or say a prayer at each of the plaques marking the Stations, a reminder that God is to be found in the teeming life of the world just as much as in moments of quiet withdrawal from its noise and bustle.

We were aware all the time of being in one of the earliest centres of human civilisation. At Jericho we were shown a tower dating from 7500 BC, long before the city which Joshua destroyed. At Meggido there were ruins of the fortress built by King Solomon and of the even earlier fortress of the Canaanites, both built to command the King's Highway, a reminder that this land has always been a meeting point of the great trade routes linking Africa and Asia and Europe. By comparison the extensive ruins of the Roman city of Caesarea Maritima, with its restored theatre still in use, seemed almost modern.

Pilgrims and tourists see more of the past of a country than its present but it was good to be made aware that Christianity is very much a living religion in Israel. In Jerusalem we visited the church used by the small community of people who still speak Aramaic, the language of Jesus. On Sunday morning we were warmly welcomed at Arabic matins in the Anglican church in Nazareth - and we were reminded that the

chief Palestinian negotiator in the current peace talks is a Christian.

Nazareth is an Arab town with a large Christian population, though a new Jewish settlement is being built further up the hill. The town, we were told, has an elected mayor, 'but all effective power is in the hands of the military governor'. Our contact with the political situation consisted simply of little snippets like that and in 10 days we had no chance of finding out how significant they really were. Our guide was an Arab and so most of the snippets were from the Palestinian point of view. He pointed out, for instance, the large, new Jewish 'settlements' (in reality towns of 20,000 or more people) on the hills round Jerusalem and quietly invited us to notice that the cranes and bulldozers were still working. Building was still going on.

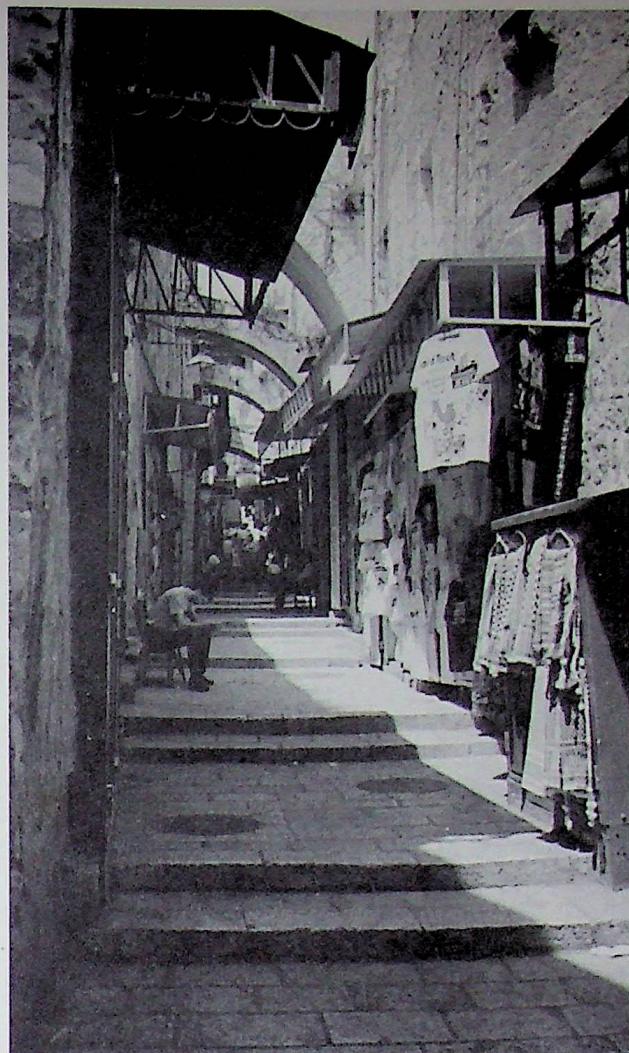
Perhaps the most significant of these snippets, because completely unconscious, was when he told us that he'd just heard on the news about a Palestinian convicted of killing an Israeli policeman. He said that when the van taking him from court reached the gaol the prisoner had disappeared. And then he chuckled, a chuckle which said more than many words could have done about relations between Palestinians and Israelis.

But we also had lunch one day, up in the north, at an hotel operated by a kibbutz. The kibbutz is surrounded by obviously prosperous farm land, producing vegetables, fruit and grain in abundance. We were told that when the kibbutz was founded, in 1943, this now fertile country was just a malarial swamp.

We had the feeling at times of being in an occupied country (another factor in bringing the New Testament stories alive for us). There were armed soldiers at every turn in Jerusalem. We even saw a sharpshooter on the top of the Western Wall. School outings were accompanied by teachers carrying guns; and outside churches, alongside the signs requesting 'no shorts' and 'no smoking', there were also signs saying 'no guns'.



Red road from Jericho to Jerusalem



Seluka

What kept coming back into my mind throughout our 10 days in Israel was the statement of the distinguished theologian Hans Küng: '*There will never be peace between nations until there is peace between religions.*' Nothing underlines the importance, and the difficulty, of dialogue between the world's religions so much as Jerusalem, the holy and divided city. If we are ever to experience God's peace we have to give up the triumphalism and exclusiveness which disfigure all religions. We have to recognise God, not only in our own tradition, but also in other traditions, not only in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre but also in the Dome of the Rock and the Western Wall.

The first Communion service of our pilgrimage was in the Garden of Gethsemane. Our guide, a Muslim, offered to buy bread and wine for us; and at the Offertory it was he who brought forward the bread and wine and presented them at the Altar. Many Muslims would have been shocked that he was willing to do so; many Christians would have been shocked that we invited him. But at that moment, in that place, it seemed absolutely right.

Faith Restored

I have just returned from a weekend at Cuddesdon on the theme 'A Journey of Discovery', led by Alan Johnson and Adrian Dudman.

In all my 60-plus years of membership of Toc H that weekend was one of the highlights of my life in the Movement. In that short time together in a small group we discovered or rediscovered what lies at the heart of Toc H. Without that discovery, all our service, all our participation, our projects, jobs, our concern in its administrative structure and finance pale into insignificance, important though these undoubtedly are.

I have to confess that there have been times when my faith in the Movement has been a bit wobbly. I wonder whether the fact that many members do not fully, I believe, understand the Christian foundation upon which Toc H is built, may be the main cause of our falling membership.

I came away from that weekend renewed and refreshed both physically and spiritually, much needed by me at this particular time, and with my faith in Toc H restored and strengthened.

We discussed among other things what the Christian way of life meant to us and I can assure you that though this may sound heavy going to some, it was far from so. It is significant that our nearest neighbours at Cuddesdon House are the Theological College, a place of learning, and the local church, a place of worship, and we lie midway between the two. Both learning and worship are essential ingredients and a very necessary part of Toc H.

The purpose of this letter is not only to thank Alan and Adrian for their careful preparation for the weekend but perhaps more importantly to recommend and encourage every member who takes his membership of Toc H seriously, to attend a weekend of this nature whenever it becomes available. He will not regret it.

Don Lockhart
Berkhamsted

Exploration in Oxfordshire

How many know what they miss through apathy, aversion or anything else? Time away with a mix of people at centres like Cuddesdon is well spent. When Adrian Dudman and Alan Johnson prepare a flexible framework like the recent Voyage of Discovery, it is very likely that future events will be even more fruitful for others. Those who have not explored An Honest Test and/or A Still Centre weekend should not hesitate.

Eyes and ears were feasted with natural creation plus live music. Taste buds were stimulated by fine catering and energies restored by restful rooms and our final event on Sunday in the chapel. We left, having sung 'To God be the Glory', carrying tapers lit from altar candles to light our commitment, viz. after our return from exploration to spread discovery as far as God allows.

Your Letters

'Democracy ain't that simple' Part II

To follow the points alluded to in this letter from Neal Terry, the reader will need to compare in detail Stewart Casimir's letter in the September issue (p.II).

It seems obvious to me that this will be the view of someone who likes to get their own way. A principal demand of purest democracy is to put the other first and to humble oneself. Of course the maxim of Napoleon Pig is irony. Should we otherwise believe that Orwell is not a satirist? What was Napoleon's phraseology in support of? That's correct. The STRUCTURES that he sought to impose on the members of the farm. I would also suggest that the collapse of the Sioux Nation was not due to structural collapse after the death of one chief. I feel it had more to do with white men, employing their power (structures) to slaughter and plunder for their personal gain. It is the structures that in fact alienate the people from each other.

The example Stewart Casimir (Letters, *Point three*, September 1992) uses of our government is a case in point. Our existing voting structure has ensured that for the last 14 years we have had a government that 57% - 60% of the population did not want. What more realistic example do you want of structures alienating people. "Three million unemployed is a small price to pay for low inflation". "If it isn't hurting it isn't working". I trust I need not source these quotes. But who is it hurting? Who is paying the price?

I'm sorry to disappoint those who expect me to list the groups in society that are generally seen as pitiable victims. No, it hurts all of us. My sympathy is not for oppressed groups but for the people who make such statements, who see the structure as important. It is these people who will wield the structure to get their own way and in doing so will further delude themselves that they are 'in the right'.

Neal Terry
Tyne & Wear

The Editor, Point 3,
Toc H Headquarters,
1 Forest Close,
Wendover, Aylesbury,
Bucks, HP22 6BT



Thanks to all concerned, especially the other participants.

Antony Spencer
London

Point Three Our Toc H Lifeline

Peterborough Branch very reluctantly decided to cease meeting on a local branch basis, mainly owing to our age and consequential reduced mobility. However, we are reasonably alert in mind and body and have a great respect for our membership and all it stands for, so have transferred to District Membership.

My main reason for writing is to record our appreciation of the very much more interesting journal presentation. It is most refreshing to read about the Movement, activities, our views of grass roots membership and branch news. In-depth articles on topics are of great importance and necessary to inform and stimulate us, but not at the expense of in-house information. We look upon *Point three* as our Toc H lifeline.

We made a final branch contribution to the Family Purse, but would like our closing balance to go towards the postage costs of the journals.

Ken Gilks
Peterborough

Reaching a Wider Audience

As for most people, one of the highlights of my day is the mail, and yesterday's was really worth waiting for. In it were several cheerful and encouraging letters and October's *Point three*. Congratulations John and Ruth and any others involved in its production. From the cover with its excellent photo to the last page with its ads, the whole magazine does so much to bring the world-wide family of Toc H together...

Keeping in touch, keeping open the lines of communication, are so very important. Tubby used to do this: I well remember his daily timetable which always included writing letters - dozens of them. Poor Couly! I would like to think that this overseas edition of *Point three* might encourage people in far-flung corners of the globe to establish some sort of contact with each other...

One of the concerns I have about Toc H literature is that I wonder what audience it has. In this country I would have to say that in the main its audience is Toc H members only, and I can sympathise with Margaret Stein's comment (*Point three*, page 14), 'It's a bit annoying when people come up and say "Ah! Toc H is still going!"' I get this kind of comment over and over again. I do believe Toc H publications have to reach a

wider audience, and once they do they have got to have some appeal to this audience. People do read quality publications, and this is what we should be working hard to produce, to ensure that people out there, the unconverted, at least know that Toc H is alive and well.

Ray Geise, Queensland, Australia

Toc H Action Groups (TAGs)

I write on the 18 October with the threat of coal pit closures adding thousands to the millions of men already out of work plus the millions more dependent on or affected by their 'redundancy' (a word meaning of no further use) and regarded, not as human beings, but as an acceptable figure justified in the one-horse policy of deflation.

There seems so little ordinary people can do to help these fellow citizens, among whom there are thousands of young people leaving school and university unable to find jobs and therefore denied the exercise of responsibility which builds character. But there is one thing which can be done.... I am told that one Toc H branch has already opened a club for youngsters, which gets them off the street corners, out of the cold and rain, in a warm welcoming atmosphere where they can rest, read, write or play games. That is good and on the right lines.

But I think we might develop the club idea by opening centres for all comers, properly staffed and organised so that by gradual steps, as opportunity offers, groups of 'customers' can be involved in various arts such as drawing, painting, acting, singing and orchestral groups, as well as crafts, building up as qualified help is offered from the ranks of older men and women now redundant.

Besides these activities the outgoing expression of service to the local community should be developed, thus offering a sense of responsibility to the groups using the centre. In short, we would be organising groupssimilar to Toc H branches without the Christian commitment required by the Main Resolution and therefore open to all comers. A significant step in reconciliation.

The beauty of the idea is that the whole family of Toc H could become involved. It certainly would require the full commitment of staff and Family Purse resources to staff and finance the centres.

Much detailed preparatory work would be required before any centre was opened but that could safely be left in the capable hands of the Central Executive.

Jack Harrison
East Sussex

BRANCH NEWS



Cardiff Branch meet at the Dan-y-Bryn Cheshire Home once a month, and four times a year some of the residents and helpers, as shown here, visit the Toc H centre to join in the elderly and handicapped parties.

Huddersfield and Paddock Women's Branches held a 60th birthday party in October. Men from **Lindley** and **Newsome Branches** came to help celebrate along with the padre, the Revd Reg Baldock, and staff members Bill Bains and Alan Budge. Peg Guile, District Secretary, writes: '*We also welcomed many former members who have moved away from the area... After a sumptuous buffet tea, the happy day ended with prayers giving thanks for the past and hope for the future*'.



Pensioners and toddlers turned Hippies for the day as arthritis sufferers of all ages took part in a sponsored Hippy Day walk to raise cash for the Arthritis and Rheumatism Council. Each of the walkers received a medal from the Mayor of Brighton after the stroll along the sea-front. Dorothy Murfin of **Brighton Branch**, seen on the right of the photo holding the hand of the youngest walker, raised £165 for the Council.

Myrtle Betts, Hon Secretary of **Elmstead Joint Branch** reports that at their meeting on 9 September George Berry came from Ipswich to effect the initiation of a new member, Ann Davies, who has been active in the branch for the last nine months. Everyone enjoyed the happy evening.

Thanet Children's Camp an annual summer camp organised by the **Thanet Project Committee**, has been taking place at Rosswood, Herne, for five years. The camp gave a well deserved holiday to 12 socially deprived children, some with learning difficulties. The children and volunteers lived under canvas for a week and thought it great fun.

Hemel Hempstead Women's and Men's Branches recently had the pleasure of entertaining 45 folk from **Prideaux House** in Hackney. The party included a lady from Guatemala, two people from America and two from Holland. Jimmy Neilly writes: '*It was great to meet Molly Carlton again, organiser of this annual event. Subsequent letters of thanks have been received expressing the happiness the visitors experienced. Happiness we will not forget*'.



Grace Clayton, Chairman of **SE & W Herts District Branch**, created this flower arrangement, with a picture of **Tubby Clayton**, at the Marlborough Road Methodist Church in St Albans. The minister of the church, the Revd David Monkton, recently became the branch padre.



Members of Leigh Branch recently presented crockery and a picnic table to George and Edna Cowley for the Toc H Centre at Port Penhryn. The picnic table was made by disabled trainees from the Dawson Street Adult Training Centre, Swinton.



Left to right. Back row B Sheeran, Chair (Leigh), George & Edna Cowley, Alastair Hoy, student. Front Row, Joanne Riley & Ann Breen, student who painted some of the pots

At the garden party which followed the 1992 Annual General Meeting of the Talbot House Association, the Chaplain, the Revd Neil Llewellyn and the Dean of Poperinge joined in blessing the newly completed visitor centre (formerly known as The Slessorium). All present agreed that this facility is going to be a great asset in assisting visitors to understand the importance of the house. Earlier those attending the AGM had heard the President, Noel Cornick, speak enthusiastically of the increased use of the house by international visitors, the healthy state of the house finances and plans for further refurbishment work.



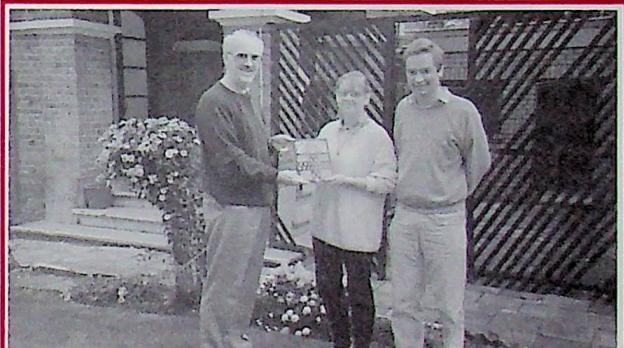
Members who attended the Scottish Conference are pictured outside The Scottish Churches House, Dunblane, at the end of their annual weekend gathering. This year they were whisked around the world on a journey of discovery by John Biggerstaff, International Officer.



The 'Winants', who visited Cell Barnes and Shenley hospitals in Hertfordshire this summer. They were entertained by SE & W Herts

District Branch at the home of the branch chairman, Grace Clayton, in St Albans.

Members of the North East Region pictured attending a Training Day for Chairmen, Secretaries and Treasurers. This was led by Gillian Sunley and John Biggerstaff and held in York. The highlight was the attendance of John Bowman from Harare, Zimbabwe.



Car Boot Surprise. Norman Brooks of Old Costessey, Norwich, a collector of First World War memorabilia, bought a plaque bearing the Cross of Lorraine design at a car boot sale. On the back was an inscription: 'This coat of arms was given to Padre C D A Blackman, honorary association padre of Toc H on October 31st, 1938 by members of the Norwich branch of Toc H in memory of 16 years friendship and happy working together. It is also to serve as a reminder of his founding Toc H in Norwich in November 1922'.

Norman thought it was a shame that the plaque should come to such a sorry end and contacted his local press to try and find someone for whom it had some meaning. The resulting story was read by Alan Brooke, Mid-East Regional Chairman. This led to discussions between Alan, Norman and John Biggerstaff, and the decision to display the plaque at the new Visitor Centre at Talbot House. The photo shows John presenting Jacques Ryckebosch and Martine Boone with the plaque.



Toc H in Bedfordshire held a reception at the Harpur Centre in Bedford on the evening of 16th October. Among the 70 guests, enjoying wine and cheese, were representatives of many organizations in the town and the district. Among them, were the Bishop of Bedford, the High Sheriff of Bedfordshire and the deputy Mayor.

The Director, John Mitchell, spoke about the work of Toc H and, in particular, new areas of work with Friendship Circles. Members of the Friendship Circles and the Branches helped to make the evening a success.

Toc H Working Weekend

John Goodwin, John Smith, Vic and Bob Court and I, together with three members from Exeter, formed the party attending the annual Toc H working weekend, held this year at Cuddesdon. It was my first visit to the house, built in 1952 as a residence for the Bishops of Oxford and now owned and managed by Toc H. On arriving at 6pm, I had a fine first impression of the peaceful and quiet surroundings, the beautiful lawns and gardens, and the house itself, very modern with all amenities. It was a lovely sunny evening. After an excellent buffet, as we walked around the grounds, a plan for the working weekend began to fall in place: a general tidying up of the grounds and gardens.

The next day, with strimmers, rakes and spades at the ready, battle commenced. The staff at the house were very impressed with our work, and the cook baked some scones to have with our elevenses. Work continued after lunch, when we discovered a greenhouse hidden in the long grass! The overgrown banks on the main road now looked better, bushes and hedges were cut and the general appearance of the grounds vastly improved.

After dinner, we again relaxed in the lounge, discussing various Toc H topics. We worked on the grounds the next morning and after an excellent lunch, spent the afternoon in discussion on Toc H matters. On a final walk round the gardens before departing, it was satisfying to see the improvement in the grounds and gardens due to our efforts. We have an open invitation to return any time as guests of Cuddesdon House.

Light was taken by Vic Court and the weekend, made happy with the friendship of others, ended. That's Toc H! May I thank all the other members for the friendship and companionship shared over the Working Weekend.

David Hunt
Chiseldon Men's Branch



Jack McGregor Luke sent in this photograph of the Haywain District AGM at Colchester with guest speaker Ruth Boyd.



Chiltern Hills Branch present a cheque for £805 to the patients fund of the local Wendover Health Centre - half the proceeds from the Toc H Charity Shop's first three months of trading.

Welcome to 14

New Members

The following new members were registered during Oct/Nov

Leslie Naylor (Andover J)
Ada L Scane (Bitterne W)
Malcolm Routledge (Broughton Astley M)
Ms Karen M R Thomson (Central branch)
Mrs Iris Dean (Cheadle Hulme W)
Mrs Nancy Parratt (Long Eaton J)
Mrs A D 'Nancy' Davis,
Mrs Doreen McCarthy (Nailsea W)
Mrs Helen Cunningham (Paderborn J)
Mr Louis Leroy,
Mrs Lutgarde Wackenier (Poperinge J)
Mrs Vivienne Needles (Rhyl North J)
James C Roscoe, Mrs Anne E Roscoe (Southport J)

Deaths

We regret to announce the death of the following members:

In August Averill M Wood (Central branch)
In September S E W 'Betty' Hadfield (Cavendish District)
Alice M Hill (Norwich)
Elizabeth Mathieson (Bitterne)
Arthur Peacock (Leeds & Craven District)
A St. G Walsh (Stockport District)
Kenneth G Bloxham (Wessex District)
Jimmy Campbell (Winsford)
Maurice F Chambers (Isle of Wight District)
Amy Green (Central branch)
James A Jarvis (Guisborough)
Sydney W G Obee (Bournemouth & Christchurch)
Thomas 'Rosey' Romanis (Edgmond)
W Leonard Rowe (Lymington)
Brinley J Thomas (Treforest)
Not previously recorded Eric A Edser (Springfields District)
Francis Davey (Calstock)
J D 'Jack' Gilbert, Frederick Wilkins (Ashby-de-la-Zouch)

SPECIAL TRIBUTES

On 7 October members from the North Wales and North West Region and further afield gathered at Liverpool Parish Church to give thanks for the life and work of **Audrey (Peth) Whitfield**. The service was conducted by the Rector, the Revd Canon Nicholas Frayling, and contained two of her favourite hymns. The reading from *Philippians 2:11* was read by Christine Bostock.

Peth must have been the longest serving staff member of our Movement and was known and loved everywhere. In her tribute Ruth Welsby recalled many happy occasions and friendships created by Peth. Two important memorials of her life and work prosper today. The Liverpool Lunch Club meets monthly and is without doubt the largest regular gathering of members in this region. The Birthday Scheme was very dear to her heart and it has created friendships and happiness around the world. Yes, we and many others will remember her. **CHC**

Toc H and Ipswich Men's Branch lost a valued member on 3 September with the death of **Benjamin William Cooper**. He joined Toc H while serving in the Western Desert during the Second World War. He was responsible for starting a branch in Mildenhall and on moving to Ipswich joined the local branch. Benserved as a Central Councillor for six years, Branch Chairman for several years and at the time of his death had been Branch Pilot for over 12 years. He was a valued member of his local church serving at different times as choirmaster, organist, lay reader and lay preacher. He will be sorely missed. **ERT**

Sidney (Sid) Obee, who died on 11 October, joined Toc H in Caernarvon in 1940 and continued to serve the Movement when he moved to Stafford in 1945. In 1952 he and his family moved to Bournemouth and he joined the Boscombe Men's Branch where he became the Chairman, Pilot and Jobmaster. When the Bournemouth and Christchurch Joint Branch was formed he transferred and was again very active in office as Jobmaster. He was a member of the Management Committee of the Toc H Centre, Iford, Bournemouth. An enthusiastic, loyal and helpful member throughout his life, he brought many people into the Movement. He is sadly missed by all who were privileged to know him. **EGD**

During the last two months four members of Ashby-de-la-Zouch Men's Branch have joined the Elder Brethren. **Jack Gilbert**, ex-Royal Navy, was a keen supporter of the local Cheshire Home and for many years a Central Councillor. **John Quimby** served as 'log recorder' of the branch and as a finder of speakers at branch meetings. **Eric Sinclair** was ever willing to provide transport both for branch purposes and for other organisations besides. **Fred Wilkins**, who joined the Movement in 1938, was a veteran of Dunkirk and the River Chindwin (Rangoon). All four will be sorely missed by the branch, who ask for the prayers of the Movement at this difficult time in the life of the branch. **DE**

The Revd Kenneth George Bloxham was renowned for his friendliness, scholarship, preaching and passionate concern for the Church. His long life was characterised by a vigour and enthusiasm which was sustained until his sudden and peaceful passing on 16 October.

Born in 1906, the son of a lifelong Wesleyan Methodist Local Preacher, Kenneth felt the call of God to preach and to join the ministry at an early age. He was accepted for the Wesleyan Methodist Ministry in 1926. There followed three years at Richmond College and undergraduate studies at the University of London, years he would cherish for the rest of his life. He continued studies at Marburg University, guided by such scholars as Bultmann, and there he acquired his fluency in German, which was to prove invaluable in his work with the forces.

Kenneth had the unusual distinction of exercising his ministry in three quite distinct phases. The first of these began in 1936. Following his return from Marburg he was invited to become a full-time chaplain to Toc H. For the next 17 years he offered leadership to the Movement, which at that time exercised a powerful influence on large numbers both inside and outside the recognised churches. Inevitably, he was closely associated with work amongst the forces during the Second World War, and his work included an appointment to review the social and spiritual facilities of the British Army in Germany. He was granted an acting rank of full colonel. For four unforgettable years he was given responsibility for all Toc H work in Australia, which involved organising branches and a great variety of social work. His continued keen interest was recognised when he was later made a President of Toc H.

The second phase of Kenneth's career began in 1954 when he was called back to the circuit ministry. He served in Edinburgh, where he was also the Methodist Chaplain to the University of Edinburgh. This was followed by an outstanding ministry at the Broadway Church in the Ealing and Acton Circuit. He also served on the National Children's Home General Committee, as Superintendent of the Wimbledon Circuit and finally in the Sutton Coldfield Circuit.

In 1973, this loving and devoted family man retired to Wimborne with his wife Nora. This marked the third phase of Kenneth's remarkable ministry. He entered wholeheartedly into the life of the circuits in the area. He was much sought after as a preacher. His remarkable memory and ability with language made him a masterly raconteur. He had a wide knowledge of church music, was an accomplished organist and an authority on organ building.

The large gathering at the triumphant Service of Thanksgiving was testimony to the esteem in which this good man was held. The Revd Dr Reginald Mallett gave the address and Kenneth's son Michael read from the end of *Pilgrim's Progress*. His sudden passing was just as he would have wished it with his powerful mind active and his pen in hand. He died in the 87th year of his age and the 63rd year of his ministry. **DRH**

TOC H CAROL SERVICE AT ALL HALLOWS CHURCH

Saturday 12 December 1992 at 2.30 pm

Further details from: Connie Pring
39 Princes Plain
Bromley Common
Kent BR2 8LH
Tel: 081 462 8164 (after 7 pm)

The Beginning of World Chain of Light 1992

This year you are invited to join us at the beautiful Toc H Centre at Port Penrhyn to celebrate the international start of the World Chain of Light. This location, overlooking the Isle of Anglesey and the Menai Strait, with the mountains of Snowdonia nearby, is a wonderful place to come away to for a few days and to reflect quietly with others on Toc H.

You are very welcome to be with us from Friday evening 11 December to Sunday morning 13 December, or any part of that time. We do need to know numbers, so please tell us if you are coming as far in advance as you can. Dormitory accommodation for 34 people is available at the Centre.

You may book a bed through Edna Cowley, Toc H Centre, Port Penhryn, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 4HN (Tel: 0248 351906).

Further information is available from Edna or from Timothy Day, 28 Llys Sychnant, Conwy, Gwynedd LL32 8RB (Tel: 0492 593197).

Christian Singles, friendship contacts, fellowship groups, social events, nationwide. Weekend houseparties. Holidays.

Christian Fellowship Friendship, Dept 23B, Edenthorpe, Doncaster DN3 2QD

Small Ads

Small advertisements must be received (with remittance) five weeks before publication day, which is the 23rd of the preceding month. The charge is 10p a word (minimum £1) plus VAT, to *Point three Magazine*. Rates of display advertisements can be obtained from the Editorial Office, Toc H Headquarters, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Aylesbury, Bucks HP22 6BT.

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World Chain of Light 1992

CUDDESDON VIGIL

A World Chain of Light vigil will be held at Cuddesdon House from 6.30 pm on Friday 11 December to 9 pm on Saturday 12 December.

Our theme this year will be 'A Faith To Live By Within The Family'. You are welcome to join us for part or all of the vigil. There will be a creche available and for full details of the programme and costs please apply to:

Alex Fox, Lindridge House, Lindridge Hill, Kingsteignton, Newton Abbot, Devon TQ13 3QE. Tel: 0626 65670.

TALBOT HOUSE - HONORARY WARDENS

1992 has been a very successful year for volunteer Honorary Wardens at Talbot House, Poperinge. It is hoped that members will now consider volunteering their services for 1993.

The main duty is to be available during the evening and overnight - answering the telephone, greeting new arrivals and making sure the residents are happy.

Travel costs together with a daily expense allowance are payable. Cover is needed from the end of February to mid December 1993. If you can offer a month or two please contact John Biggerstaff, Toc H International Office, Forest Close, Wendover, Bucks HP22 6BT (0296 623911) for more details.

Christmas at Khasdobir

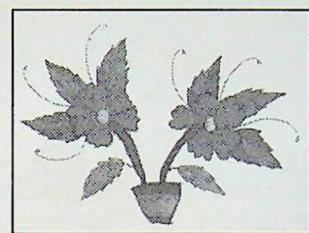
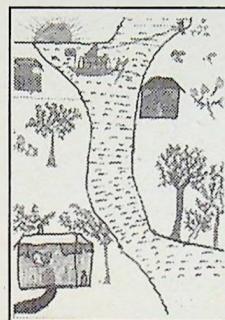
Notelets: No message inside. Ideal as gifts they can be used all year round as greeting cards or opened out for letter writing

Christmas Cards: designed by Dan Jones.

Message inside:

Season Greetings and Best Wishes for the New Year.

Pack of 10 (one design): £1.00 + p&p 36p



Please mark envelopes *Friends of Khasdobir* and make cheques payable to Toc H

Friends of Khasdobir

c/o Toc H International Office, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. HP22 6BT
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